# THE ESSENCE OF THE CATHOLIC

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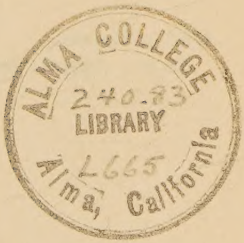
From the German of

P. PETER LIPPERT, S.J.

Three lectures delivered to Catholic students at Heidelberg, September 1922




P. J. KENEDY & SONS
NEW YORK
1930

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WESTMONASTERII,
*die 25a Augusti*, 1930.

*Made and Printed in Great Britain*

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# I

## THE FAITH OF THE CATHOLIC

It has often been asserted that a Catholic or a Protestant is such by nature and birth; that we find Catholics among Protestants and Jews, and conversely, that in the ranks of Catholicism there are men who are by nature Protestants. What are we to think of this suggestion? Is there a Catholic or Protestant human species? Are we to conceive the germ-structure of the protoplasm as being either Catholic or Protestant? Experience certainly gives no indication of it. Nor could such a view find a place in the Catholic system, since Catholicism claims to be an absolute religion, designed for mankind as a whole, and holds that every man is fit, and in fact bound, to be a Catholic.

It is impossible, at any rate, to prove scientifically the existence of a Catholic species or type. All we can do is to describe the spiritual and personal individuality of the

Catholic in the light of experience, and ask ourselves simply: What should the outlook of the Catholic be? So we proceed to construct an ideal man in whom Catholicism is embodied in all its fulness, in all its wealth and depth. No such man exists in reality, it is true; for between the individual Catholic and the religion he professes there is a wide and deep gulf. But in these lectures we shall consider a man, or rather many men, in whom the Catholic system has been reduced to practice. I say 'many men,' because there may be many men who are perfect Catholics, and yet they may differ considerably from one another in their distinctive characteristics. A man's individuality, his spiritual character, depends upon the world of reality in the midst of which he lives, and lives mentally, not only physically. It depends, therefore, on the values which he creates or purposes. In other words, his character depends upon the realities and the values which mould it. To describe these would be simply to describe Catholicism. But our theme is not: the essence of Catholicism, but: the essence of the Catholic. Hence we shall have to see how these realities and these values take shape in a given living person, how his personality

reacts to them, what is the relation of his spirit to them, in a word, how the Catholic makes these realities his own and how he acts under their influence. In the first place, then, we must survey the world of reality in which the Catholic lives. Obviously it is important to consider in what world a man moves intellectually, and is spiritually educated, what world he knows and loves. Is it a world purely material, or is it one which reaches into the depths of spiritual being? Is it a world whose expanse covers an entire people, or is it encompassed within the circle of domestic duties, cares, and interests, yet by its very restricted scope gaining in depth and intensity? Such questions are of paramount importance for the appreciation of a man's nature and character.

The Catholic's world of reality is first and foremost objective; it is independent of his thought and perception. I describe the Catholic's reality as he sees it, as he experiences it and believes in it; and I say that for the Catholic it is an objective reality, in the midst of which he lives. It is not the product of his thought, still less of his sentiment, of his desire or of his dreams. It confronts him, it is above him, outside him;

it is something distinct from himself. For the unsophisticated this is a truism. And the Catholic is unsophisticated, artless in the original and best sense of the word. He adopts the most natural impulse of the soul, namely, a belief in the objectivity of reality, in the primacy of being over thought. This attitude finds expression in the dogmatic truth that the first Person in the Catholic's triune God is the Father, while the Son, the Father's Thought of himself, is the second Person. Thought is secondary, it comes after being, it originates from being, it is conditioned, shaped, and produced by reality. In this there is a certain *naïveté;* for the human soul quite naturally forms the judgement that its spiritual content has a transcendent meaning, that it means something that is above and outside itself. It is this absolute and necessary attitude towards reality which is ever opposed to all attempts of Idealistic philosophy to give the primacy to thought, and to regard being, reality, as an emanation of human thought. We cannot but clothe the workings of our consciousness with a transcendent significance, with a meaning that carries us to something over and above ourselves.

We have here the root and foundation of the Catholic attitude, and it may be defined as subjection, humility, reverence, or faith. It is allegiance to, and dependence upon, a non-ego; it is the contemplation of a higher dominating, inexorable, inflexible reality distinct from self, one whom neither thought, nor dreams, nor desire, nor need can affect, a reality that moulds me, to which I am subject. Such is the basis of the Catholic attitude of faith; it is found in the unsophisticated position which the human soul naturally assumes in the face of the real world.

Religious reality, too, is objective to the Catholic mind. It is independent of his thought and will; it is no reflex act of his religious sentiment, no ideal construction erected over the dark, deep gulf of religious impulse. This morning we were all under the shadow of the impending Judgement, while we listened to the strains of Cherubini's 'Dies Iræ.' The last Judgement, the Last Day is to the Catholic an objective reality, an approaching event, as real as the life of the suns in the firmament that flame up and grow dim, that glow with heat and become cold, as real as any event in this world. The last Judgement is no vision or hallucina-

tion, no wraith rising over the dark sea of man's sense of guilt, and assuming the form of a tribunal. On the contrary, it is the real approach of the judgement that awakens the soul to a recognition of its guilt and causes it to cry for mercy in the Kyrie eleison.

This objectively real world the Catholic extends wide and deep into regions where it is less easily apprehended. The objective existence of a world governed by the tests of experience is overwhelmingly borne in upon us. But the world in which the Catholic lives is also spiritual. He believes in the primacy of the spirit over matter. For him, what is perceptible to the senses is not the whole of reality, but merely its fringe, merely the circumference of the whole. For the Catholic, the fuller reality begins beyond the superficial world of sense. Beyond that which is apparent lies the awesome gulf of things in themselves. Man's body belongs to the world of experience; we are familiar with it, we see its shape, we hear its voice. But beyond what is visible is the soul, a reality which stretches deep down into the world that is outside experience and sight, but yet which to the Catholic is more real,

more undeniable than his very body. Many simple folk among Catholics have so profound a sense of the reality of the soul that they experience greater distress for the state of their own soul or that of their neighbour than for any bodily ailment.

Above all, beyond the world of appearances is God, the divine reality, the abyss of spiritual being. Beyond the human nature of Christ is the divine Person of the Word, a depth of being that transcends all that we can experience. Behind the visible forms of the Eucharist, which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands, is the reality of our Lord's human nature, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells corporally. Yet of all this the outward forms that we see give no inkling.

The Catholic believes too in the spirit that pervades the Church. The Church, in the eyes of the Catholic, is something more than any visible organisation, something far more than an association. For the Catholic the true reality of the Church begins beyond sense-experience. The fuller reality lies beyond Popes, bishops, convents, faithful, and churches. The Church begins where the senses end.

Then there is the future life. It is the belief of the Catholic that there is an existence, a world of reality, in which the life of the senses has no part; that after death, after the cessation of sense-activity, true life begins; that this life of sense which we now lead is but the preparation, the antechamber that leads to the real life beyond. This faith in the spiritual world and in its objectivity is a portentous fact not to be underestimated. Philosophical discussions in every age have been concerned with spirituality, with the knowledge of the spiritual, with faith in the spiritual. To have preserved faith in the world of the spirit despite the overwhelming influences of the senses, in the face of all that is mortal and transitory, is a wonderful achievement. And this passport to the spiritual world is given to every Catholic, even to the simplest, from childhood; for him the spiritual world is the obviously real world, it is the world in which he lives. The spiritual world, moreover, is conceived by the Catholic as *personal*. This idea of personality is also primitive; it is formed quite naturally by the soul of man. In fact, personality is the first experience that a man has of himself. From this

primary experience he then rises by a swift transition to awareness of another person, of one who bends over his cradle, smiling always, ever kindly, noble and unselfish, helpful always, ever competent and wise; his mother. Thus he advances in life and spiritual development according as he makes progress in the experience of personality.

Personality is, therefore, one of the simplest and yet one of the most real and effective concepts in life, for upon it depends the whole of man's spiritual advancement. It is the source of all that is great in human life and of all that is new; its creative power engenders all fresh incentive, while reverence for a person is perhaps the mightiest motive that can influence the spirit of man. Two examples may suffice; the pupil's reverence for his master, and hero-worship. The teacher's ascendancy over the young is based upon the veneration which he inspires. No training methods will avail where the master fails to command respect in his pupil, where the pupil does not recognise his teacher as his master. So it is, too, with hero-worship. A people is not easily moved or stirred from its lethargy; but put a hero at their head

and they will follow him to the death. These two are possibly the strongest incentives that man has in his spiritual life.

The Catholic reveres personality under both these forms. Reality, as the Catholic sees it, is entirely built upon the notion of personality. The source of all things is a Personality, the greatest of all, the triune God, who is so rich in personality that his inner life consists in an ineffable intercourse of three divine Persons. Moreover, the structure of the universe presents an ascending scale of perfection in personality. The Catholic sees a multiplicity of beings ranging from the impersonal to the personal and then rising higher and higher in the perfection of personality. Thus the more perfect a being is, the richer it is in personality.

Hence the end of the world, the consummation of all things, is for the Catholic a personal experience. Man's consummation in everlasting life is a dialogue, a personal intercourse between the soul and God. This is why he lays such stress upon personal immortality. He has been blamed for thus clinging to a personal survival, as if it involved a form of selfishness: why should he want to perpetuate his insignificant person?

The accusation rests upon a misunderstanding. The Catholic clings to personal immortality, not for his own sake but for the sake of another to whom he is consecrated, after whom he strives. There are many Catholics of the deeper and finer sort, who care nothing for their personal survival as such; who would fervently desire to cease to exist, to repose in nothingness, were it not that the love of that Other to whom they are dedicated, the thought that they exist not for themselves but for Another, constrains them to desire everlasting life.

Hence we can see why the heavenly court is a reality to Catholics such as those outside the Church find it difficult to conceive. The Catholic veneration of the saints is nothing else than the projection of the cult of personality into the future life; it is hero-worship overstepping the barriers of death. Men eagerly follow those in whom they have placed their trust, and if those leaders are worthy, if their moral character is unimpeachable, if they are unselfish, good and righteous men, if, above all, they are men of God, then the stream of souls in their wake flows swift and strong. Why should they halt at the gates of death?

For the Catholic death is no reality; it is nothing but a gateway that leads into life. It is beyond death that true life begins; it is there that the Catholic enters into a perfect personal intercourse with those whom he reveres, loves and honours, in whom he has confidence and to whom he prays. In this life he implores a dear friend to pray for him to their common God. In the same way, and with better reason now that his friend is nearer to God, he asks that same friend, who has passed through the dark portals of death, to intercede with God for him.

The meaning of Catholic prayer thus becomes plain. The life of prayer for the Catholic is no mere mental fabric created by his spiritual longings; it is a real act by which, better than by any other means, he grasps reality. In the practice of prayer the Catholic does not think primarily of the possibility or otherwise of his prayer being answered. Whether it can or cannot be heard, in what manner it will be heard, these are secondary questions. What matters is that prayer is personal intercourse with another Being who is as real as, far more real, far more objective than, himself. To come near

to him, to walk in his presence, to be spiritually united with him; this is the meaning of Catholic prayer. This purpose may not always be present to the minds of all who pray; but subconsciously it is deep in their hearts.

* * *

And what is the way of approach to this Catholic world of reality, to this personal and spiritual world? This we must define, at any rate briefly, because it will render the objectivity of the Catholic's real world still more evident. The Catholic has four roads open to him to attain the knowledge of spiritual things: experience, reason, faith and contemplation; experience which is based upon the senses, reason which reaches out beyond experienced reality, faith which outstrips reason, and contemplation which triumphantly reaches the goal.

The first three ways possess one feature in common, that all issue in obscurity. The Catholic has a tragic sense of the limitations of his knowledge. He is ever beset with the consciousness that in this life he walks in comparative darkness. Experience—the senses of touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing—leads ever to the unfathomable. The

science of physics tells us that the infinitely great as well as the infinitely small eludes our experience. And then, directly behind this world of the senses there exists a reality of which we have no sense-experience; the reality of God, the soul, freedom, goodness. All this man can reach only by reason; no experience can ever make this visible to him, by no experiment can he touch God or the human soul. Sense-experience, then, issues in darkness. So eventually does reason. Reason leads us to secrets and mysteries upon which we can throw no light, and brings us into a region where reason itself is forced to admit that it can make no further progress.

The Catholic has another medium of knowledge, which leads him into a higher region still; he has faith. By faith he comes into contact with the divine reality. Here it is no longer man who seeks and gropes after truth; it is God who comes down and communicates truth to him; his light comes now from no torch kindled by human hands, but from God himself. But even faith has its weaknesses and is hemmed in by barriers below and above.

First our faith has limitations from below. Faith, even the faith of the Catholic, is

conditioned, as far as its expression is concerned, by the powers of natural reason, by the concepts which we form by reason, and by the world of images from which we derive them. We can only express our faith in terms of human concepts and images. These expressions of divine truth, of the realities of faith, are called Dogmas.

Dogmas—these notorious, widely misunderstood, greatly feared dogmas—are nothing else than the conceptual formulas which express the religious divine reality that is the content of faith. They signify a reality, but they are not that reality itself; they are concepts which have a transcendental significance. From this it follows that the words in which dogmas are, so to speak, clothed correspond to the period in which they have been defined, they have a certain historical setting; the expressions, the formulations of dogma are not absolute; but they signify an absolute reality. Thus the Christological dogma, the doctrine of the two natures in Christ, of his divine Person, the dogma of the three Persons of the Godhead, the dogma of transubstantiation in the Eucharist have an historical setting in the sense that they are expressed in terms of Greek concepts and

formulas. These are indeed the best that man has been able to invent in the course of centuries, but they correspond to a certain historical period. The expressions are not absolute; yet they signify the Absolute. The two wonderful series of facts that we find side by side in the life of Christ, a divine series and a human series, converging and ineffably blended in one individual, cannot be better described than by saying that in Christ there are two natures and one Person. This is precisely the meaning of the hypostatic union.

These dogmatic expressions, furthermore, are formulated in the language of imagery, like all else that is the fruit of our natural conceptions; they have their root in the world of the senses, and they are but analogies of the divine. When we express dogmatic truths we are conscious that our speech is halting and inadequate, that the very best we can find, that even the best that God himself can say to us in our language, is but a poor figure of the reality. 'We see in a glass and in a dark manner,' as S. Paul says. When we say 'God', we use a feeble word, a human word, a word replete with human images and earthly similitudes; and yet we

know that this word stands for a reality which sustains us in being, a reality infinitely rich, infinitely great, so rich and so great that no human word can ever express it.

Moreover, these dogmas are formulated in abstract terms, since it is only in abstract formulas that we can express intellectual concepts. This is the case, not only in matters of religion, but in all sciences. Einstein's theory of relativity, with its differential equations, is so abstruse and abstract that only a small minority are able to read and understand it; and yet it betokens a great and magnificent reality; it is a general view of the universe of incomparable genius. What a great truth lies behind these abstruse formulas! So the Catholic should not complain at the abstract character of his formulas of belief. Beyond them is a warm and pulsing, a rich and many-hued, reality. It is only the external formula that is abstract.

Now let us consider the limitations of faith from above. By revelation God condescends to man; hence man must wait for God to descend in the measure in which he wills to descend, and he can do nothing but accept with a ready willingness. Hence there are innumerable degrees in faith. In

some men we find a faith that attains almost to vision; there are many in whom faith is very strong, but only half-realised; and finally there are those in whom faith is a life-long cry from the depths of darkness, a faith beset with unhappiness and gloom. Man can but accept faith in the measure that God gives it to him. Hence by faith too man walks in darkness; he can make no step forward without God's help.

Then there is the fourth and last way of approach to reality, the only road that issues, not in obscurity, but in the light of glory, in eternal light, the way of vision of which we can speak only in halting words, of which by faith we have a foreshadowing, which God promised us when he said that we shall see him face to face. One day we shall come to the light, one day we shall grasp the whole of reality, we shall no longer belong to the land of darkness, but dwell ever in the light.

* * *

We have now to examine three important properties of Catholic reality. In the first place it is 'differentiated,' that is, it is organic, composed of a great number of diverse elements, which are qualitatively, and not only

quantitatively distinct. The Catholic is far from deifying the quantitative; he believes also in qualitative, specific distinctions. There is first the division of real being into God and creatures; and to safeguard this distinction, to maintain the infinite distance that separates God from the universe, is one of the Catholic's chief endeavours. Then created being itself is divided into the natural and the supernatural, into the profane and the religious, into the world of science and the world of faith, into the State and the Church. These are all distinct spheres, each has its own methods, its own laws, its own strength and its own needs, and if any of them were to fall away it would be a calamity. The Catholic believes in the right of all that is real. He believes in the right of the State, and he would regard it as a calamity if the Church alone ruled mankind. He believes in the right of the Church, and he fears the tyranny that would result if men were ruled solely by the State. No reality must be lost, each must remain, each be recognised and respected. The reason why the reality of the Catholic is so rich, so many-sided, is that it contains so many categories of being; so many, that it is impossible for any Catholic

to know and to be at home in the whole world of reality in which he lives. The world of dogma alone he can never master entirely. Hence every Catholic, even the most advanced in his religion—he especially, in fact—has some particular sphere in his world, a dwelling-place—even in dogmatic theology some central point of doctrine—in which he is especially at home. For one it will be God and Divine providence, for another the Eucharist, for a third the veneration of the Saints, for a fourth the Church of which he is a member, or perhaps just a human soul in which he is building up the kingdom of God. But every Catholic will have some sphere, be it ever so restricted, in which he is specially at home.

But still above him there reaches an infinity which he knows indeed to exist, which he is able to divine, in which he believes but which his mind can never master. And this is why the world of the Catholic is so wide-flung. Think of the immense distance that separates the dogma of the Trinity from the technique of a modern industry; two aspects of reality so far apart that the thought of passing from one to the other almost takes one's breath away. And yet the

Catholic must neglect neither, he must have the spiritual alertness to be able at least to appreciate even the most disparate phases of reality.

Moreover, these departments of the real world undergo a certain limitation through their relations to one another. They set up reciprocal barriers and so a certain antagonism arises between them; the various provinces of reality seem to be in conflict, and yet they must all be synthesised. Think, for example, of the apparent contrast between the God of Nature and the God of the Sermon on the Mount. The God of Nature seems a God of war, a God who has created a universe whose law is the struggle for existence, the God of the beasts of prey, who leaves life to fight for its existence; with ruthless force one life enters into the fray with other lives, in order to survive. Such is the God of Nature. In nature there is no love, there is only the struggle for existence. On the other hand, you have the God of the Sermon on the Mount, the God of love, of submission and self-sacrifice, the God of forgiveness, understanding and forbearance. What a contrast! It needs no small effort of mind to understand that these are but different

aspects of one and the same reality, that there is one God, one Creator, one world and one end for all things. How many there are that go astray in this matter!

For the Catholic also believes that, in spite of its diversity, reality is homogeneous, in the sense that it is governed throughout by similar laws. You have heard the question asked whether the laws that govern this little earth of ours obtain also in the stars of the Milky Way. It is indeed an awesome thought that on the heavenly bodies, thousands of light-years distant from us, the same laws obtain as in my little room; that these same laws extend through the whole of space; still more tremendous is the thought that the same laws pervade the material and the spiritual worlds, the physical and the moral, the profane and the religious, in fact, the whole of creation.

The Catholic believes that God is the first Cause of all things, that God is in all and that all is in God, and that God is so immense that the universe may be wide-flung as you will, and yet be contained by him. A thought almost unthinkable, this universal causality of God. Human philosophy took thousands of years to grasp it. Dualistic systems have

succeeded one another in the course of history, and philosophers have believed that somewhere in the universe there must be a cleavage, that there must be a line of division between God's world and the world of Another, between the world of Spirit and the world of Matter. But the Catholic believes in the universal causality of God. The whole of reality for him is a message, a revelation, a manifestation of God. Thus all that is real he can love and trust, in all reality he can find his home, a spiritual home, boundless as the perfection of God himself. The Catholic's reality has no limits, there is nothing real from which he need fly, for God is everywhere; there is no reality that he need distrust, for to him all is a revelation of God. The Catholic world of reality is homogeneous.

Finally it is a *dynamic* reality, that is, it is full of movement, restlessly active. This movement is a twofold stream, a stream that flows from God and a stream that returns to him. Each has its place in the Catholic view of the universe, and from this alone much may be learned concerning the Catholic's worship, his ascetic doctrine, his philosophy and his social ethics. There is a stream that flows from God. The fact that the world is a

creature, dependent upon God for its very being, is a proof that God is working therein; the universe was created from Nothingness by an outpouring of God's power; it is the outcome of his eternal decree. And how much more true is this of the supernatural work of salvation! In Christ God personally became visible in human form; the fulness of the Godhead was poured out in a human nature. So too the history of every Christian soul, of every soul that is redeemed, is nothing else than the process of being filled with the outpouring of God. May we not even define Christianity as a void into which God pours himself? This is precisely the meaning of the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments working *ex opere operato;* that, when all is said and done, our own acts, our own experiences, prayers, deeds and sufferings have no importance in contrast with the overwhelming outpouring of God, who so diffuses himself in our souls that he pervades and outstrips our every activity. Catholic thought, then, is inevitably and unceasingly bound up with belief in the *ex opere operato* doctrine, with the belief that God is acting in nature and in religion, in nature and in revelation. The universe,

life, the soul, salvation, heaven, all this for him is God's work rather than the work of man. To him it is a revelation, an Advent of God.

But the universe is also a movement of all creatures towards God. The whole of creation, in all its various manifestations, is possessed by the urge of coming to God, and hence all its parts and provinces are knit and bound together. S. Paul says that the irrational creation, every creature, groans for the revelation of the sons of God, in other words, that in all creatures there is an upward tendency towards the spiritual and the moral sphere, and from the spiritual world to the world of grace, to Divine sonship.

From this there follow most important consequences for the Catholic outlook on the universe. It follows that all the varieties in the universe are also relations, that they are all correlated and linked together, that one serves the purpose of another, that not one of them exists for its own sake. Let us take one example. The State is an entity in itself, it has its own legal and proper existence, its own rights and its own end or purpose. But it does not exist for its own sake, it is

not independent, it must render service. Everything must render service; no created thing belongs only to itself. Hence the created universe is in no sense self-contained. The life of man, culture, the life of the State, the present world, these are not self-contained, since they all point to something higher than themselves, all have some service to render outside their own borders. Therefore in no department of reality is there unlimited progress; all progress leads to and merges into a further advancement.

Perhaps this thought influences the life of the Catholic more than any other. Nowhere can he find rest; he feels himself urged ever beyond what he already possesses; for all reality strives after something higher, to which it is a preparation, to which it is but a means.

Hence reality is at the same time both static and dynamic. We believe that all things are interdependent, each thing helping another, each therefore limiting another, so that all reality presents a constant front. It is true that within this sphere of static movement there arises sometimes the new and the unexpected: but all has been prepared beforehand, to all things there is an

Advent; the voice crying in the desert has gone before. Even the greatest work of genius has been anticipated and prepared by thousands of years of gradual labour.

Hence it follows that what seems to be farthest removed from its ultimate perfection has already its purpose and final end in God. The belief of the Catholic in the rational foundations of his religion, in philosophy, history, science and art, is possible only inasmuch as he recognises that all these things fit together, since he knows that all things serve a common purpose, that science, literature, art, beauty, the body, all can serve as a means to the final end. Even non-Christian culture is pressed into service, and the great S. Thomas Aquinas finds place in his theological system for the philosophy of the pagan.

This is the peculiarity of Catholic reality, that nothing is lost, that every product and acquisition of the spirit, even though it may have been achieved outside the Church, is finally gathered into the exulting stream of life, that everything that is tends to one great purpose. This is the marvellous doctrine expressed by Holy Writ in the words, 'To those that love God all things work

together unto good.' It is no mere pious sentiment, it is founded in the most profound Catholic metaphysic. However appearances may indicate the contrary, everything is for the best, for the whole of reality is one stream, everything follows in an orderly procession, one sphere of reality after another, one splendour after another, one pressing another onwards along the same way, in the same stream, in the same path.

Such is the optimistic faith of the Catholic as he considers the world of reality. Reality is one organism, one not only in its cause, the divine will, but one also in its end and purpose. To this end all things conspire; nothing is lost, nothing wasted, no part destroys or negatives another. Nothing is lost, if we keep our eyes fixed upon reality. At the most nothingness, darkness, may be lost, but being, reality, all that is positive, all that strives after God at last will come to him.

We have thus studied the reality in which the Catholic lives. It is a sunny, rich, happy world, in which there is no death and no darkness. But to-morrow we shall paint another picture: the tragedy of the Catholic man, the suffering and the travail of Catholicism.

## II

### THE WILL OF THE CATHOLIC

THE determining factors of the essence of a man are of two kinds; they may be reduced either to the category of reality, or to that of value, to the category of being, or to the category of action. The answer to reality is 'Yes'; the answer to value is 'Fiat,' so be it. We have now to answer the question whether the Catholic is in this sense a creative man. What values does he create, and what is his doctrine of values? The answer to this question will give us the second dimension in our appreciation of Catholic manhood. We ask, therefore, first, how the Catholic measures his values, in other words, what is his standard of values, and secondly, how he realises them.

The scale upon which the Catholic measures his values does not indicate only degrees; it bears also two signs, one positive and the other negative, a plus and a minus;

it indicates value and worthlessness, and above it are written the words 'good' and 'evil.' It is by this standard that the Catholic measures all his moral values. The fact is of the highest importance for appreciation of his nature, for this is the cause of his tragedy and his life's torment, of his struggle and his anguish; this is the dark cloud that hovers over the life of the Catholic: the thought of guilt, of sin, the possibility, nay, the stark actuality, of evil.

What the Catholic means by good and evil must first of all be made clear, if we are to understand his activities, his sufferings, his ascetical practice, his spiritual distress, in fact, the spiritual distress of the whole Church. The opposition between good and evil is unique. It is an opposition of values, an opposition which is distinguished from all others by definite properties. For the Catholic it is a real opposition, in fact, the most real that there is, more real than any other. The antithesis between useful and harmful, between pleasant and unpleasant, between beautiful and ugly, none of these is nearly so real to him as the opposition between good and evil. The Catholic sees an essential difference between Nero and his victims,

between the profligate and a S. Cecilia, between one who dies for his country and a traitor. It is a real opposition of values, more fundamental than any other. It is a primary opposition, since it cannot be analysed into any other, and it is an ultimate opposition, since it cannot be reduced to a lower one; all others must be reduced to this. It is, furthermore, an absolute opposition, independent of time, space, or individual character, an opposition which prevails not only on earth but in heaven and in the furthermost stars, for all eternity and for ever, an absolute, irreconcilable opposition.

Hence it can have its origin only in God. For the Catholic the ultimate reason of the good lies in its conformity with the divine essence. Not in its conformity with the divine Will, as is sometimes stated; the good is good not because God wills it to be good, but because it is founded in his Essence, for he is the Good, the essential and personal Good. Since the good consists in conformity with the divine essence, it follows that it is absolute and necessary, unchangeable, primary and ultimate, and therefore irreducible, as *a priori* as God himself.

And what is created goodness? The

goodness of a rational creature consists in the free assimilation of himself to the divine essence, and therefore in his deliberate imitation of the divine essence. This is the extraordinary and marvellous thing about created goodness. Free-will is the noblest perfection—in the natural order—that God can produce in a creature, the gift of freedom is the most perfect communication of divine power; it is in freedom that the creature most closely resembles God. Man, then, uses that freedom to make himself like God; hence well-doing, when it is free, is nothing else than a realisation of God outside the divine essence. Outside the divine essence a creature is able to realise the divine essence in himself, to imitate it with an act of creation similar to the divine activity. Thus moral goodness is the most perfect projection of God *ad extra*, the most perfect that is possible to a creature. In the natural order God cannot reveal himself more clearly than in a morally good man.

Since, therefore, moral well-doing is the highest of all values, the most perfect act possible outside God, it follows that it will diffuse itself and endeavour to shape the world after God's likeness. The ultimate

meaning of moral goodness in the Providence of God is that man should complete the image of God in the world. God wills to make his creation fair, noble, harmonious and pure through the activity of good men. We are to be his followers and his heirs in the work of creation; what he has left, as it were, unfulfilled we are to perfect, what he has left dark we are to illumine. God is less concerned that every being should eat and be filled, than he is that every being should be sated by means of men's well-doing, through his active compassion; this is what he most earnestly desires. God is less concerned that no being should suffer—could he not himself directly take away all suffering?—than that this suffering should be alleviated by a compassionate creature. In this way God's goodness becomes manifest in the universe, outside him there are thus set up centres from which succour and goodness are radiated, and God himself is thus multiplied, as far as it is possible for him, the one God, to be multiplied. Moral goodness, then, is the summit of all values outside God himself, it is the most perfect assimilation to the divine essence, the ultimate fulfilment of his creative decree.

From this we may gather what a gulf yawns between moral good and evil, sin. Moral evil is a contradiction of the divine essence. And the awesome thing about sin is that man—for we are speaking always of man—uses his freedom, his most godlike power, his most godlike faculty, to achieve something which is a contradiction of God, to make a caricature of God, to blaspheme him. Such is the abyss of incomprehensible insanity that sin represents. And moral evil too, as well as moral good, has its influence on the world. As good perfects the universe, so evil corrupts it. Sin is the wilful disturbance by a creature of the universal order of things. It is in diametrical opposition to all that is divine, it opposes the divine plan of the universe, it tramples the divine will underfoot, it caricatures the soul and blasphemes the divine essence. Evil is an awful insult to the Godhead, it treats him as if he did not exist, just as good, on the contrary, is a further manifestation of him in the universe. This is the abyss of insanity that is sin. And it might be imagined that this is a mere chimera, that it could never happen, that it is only a remote possibility. But the Catholic professes his faith in the remission of sin.

Hence it is clear that there is sin to be remitted. Somewhere, at some time, I know not where, I know not when, sin stalks upon the earth, and a stream of blood, loathing, tears and curses follows in its wake.

We may well understand, therefore, why the Catholic passionately struggles against sin, why the Catholic Church for centuries has waged war against the sin of the world, not in order to abolish it, but as far as may be to make sin impossible, to root it up, to suppress it, to guard against it, to shut the door against it.

Herein lies the Catholic's life-long obsession; the deep-rooted fear of sin, because sin is the greatest, the only catastrophe, the greatest of all riddles of the universe; and a dark and gruesome riddle it is. In the war of the Catholic Church against sin, we seem to find reflected that horror and astonishment of the early Christians who, thinking that after redemption they were now free from all sin, turned and found sin still in their midst. Even the converts of the earliest days of Christianity, those first-born of Christianity, clothed in their white robes, even these stained themselves again with sin. Of the horror that went shuddering through the

Church traces are still to be found in the New Testament. Something of this same astonishment and horror is felt to-day in the confessional, in the various pastoral activities of the Catholic Church.

Such is the Catholic scale of values; the further his values lie from the zero-point and the nearer they are to the positive side, the higher they are in absolute worth.

* * *

Let us now consider how the Catholic realises these values. Here lies the tragedy of his life. Our task on this earth is to fulfil God's plan, and yet we have constantly to seek in vain to harmonize opposite tensions which during this life cannot be perfectly harmonized. There are four of these and between them we must hold our path. It is as if there were two bridge-piers set far apart, which we must not allow to approach each other, which we must ever keep separate, and yet we have to pass from the one to the other, we have to span the void between them. But the bridge will never be quite completed. Two of these opposite tensions are concerned with the object of our activities, and two with the method with which we attain that object.

There is first the contrast between the inner life and its outward manifestation, and the contrast between Nature and Supernature. In each case two bridge-piers that lie infinitely apart; and yet we have to span them with a bridge that will never be finished. This is the meaning of our moral endeavour.

The contrast between the inner and the outer man. Who has not groaned under the impossible task of equating his external actions with his interior life, or of adapting his interior life to his external actions? We are conscious that here is a lie, we feel that here is an unavoidable hypocrisy and falsehood. We have seen that moral goodness consists in using our freewill in order to shape the world after the likeness of the divine essence. The Catholic ethic is an ethic of intention and an ethic of fulfilment, one which governs the deed as well as the will. Goodwill is not everything; it is necessary, in fact it is of the essence of morality; but goodwill must accomplish something, it must produce a certificate, it must radiate in the outside world, it must shine even as far as the stars, it must be a light of the world: 'You are the light of the world . . . so let your light shine before men that they may see your good works

and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' And herein lies the irreconcilable contradiction. We can enter deep, indefinitely deep into our inward nature to perfect and adorn it; and this alone would be a life's work. But if we strive to devote ourselves entirely to what is within, we easily forget what is without, we become divorced from the outside world. If on the other hand we turn to externals, seeking to achieve something in the world, we become estranged from our inner selves; and then our life becomes a great lie: we become busy, industrious men, but we build nothing but a hollow framework.

The Church has been reproached for her external character. And it is true that she has much that is external; she stands like a city upon a hill, visible, 'set up as a standard unto the nations.' She is full of external signs; her church towers pierce the sky, her services are announced to the world by the ringing of bells. The Church marches abroad like a mighty army: her priests are like officers, her religious like an armed camp, organised in military fashion. And yet she is full of inwardness. To the outsider this cannot be made manifest; it can be seen only from within. Those hours of interior

prayer, those interior transports and consolations, the inner mysticism, the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; none can see all this unless he is already within the Church. But where is the harmony between the two? Is the external life always equated to the inward spirit? Has the inward spirit always the strength it needs to give soul and life to external activity. Who can answer in the affirmative? Who would venture to say that he has completed the bridge?

Then there is the contrast between nature and supernature. Nature is a department of reality and it must not be ignored. Indeed we must love it. The Catholic Church, the Catholic, loves nature. This Catholic love for nature is, and always has been, well known. For the Catholic nature is an image of all that lies beyond the senses. Attend the ceremonies of Holy Week and you will hear with what tender words the Church addresses 'the creature of water'; at no time are the praises of water so sweetly sung, so lovingly celebrated as in the blessing of the Font on Holy Saturday. Hear, again, the tribute paid to the busy bees in the blessing of the Paschal candle; no more beautiful song has ever been chanted in their honour.

Nature, moreover, is an expression of the supersensible; and therefore the Catholic loves all that nature offers him: flowers, colours, lights, incense, banners and bells. All this he loves, because it may be an expression of his inner nature. He loves, too, the powers of nature, even the terrible, violent, unbridled power of lower nature as found in man. The Church has striven hard for centuries to shield sex from contempt, to assert its rights, always to make the doctrine prevail that sex is good, pure and God-given, and not shameful or contemptible. The Church has ever waged this war victoriously against an exaggerated spiritualism. The Catholic loves the nobler powers of man's nature, those powers that urge him to world-conquest, that make him master the realms of speculative and practical science. He loves man's skill, his powers of invention, his intellectual power in social and economic science. Paul, one of the greatest of Catholics, exclaimed with ardent Roman pride: 'I appeal to Cæsar.' In that cry of the Apostle of Christ we have the echo of the Roman's proud consciousness of his civil rights.

The Catholic Church loves nature. But the tragedy begins when we consider nature

in its relation to the supernatural. The Catholic has to explore nature to its uttermost depths, but he must not stop there, he must not allow himself to be fettered by nature; like a diver he must rise from the depths, and raise nature up with him to its true end, the supernatural. And this is the difficult task.

What is the supernatural for the Catholic? It is nothing sensational, nothing that will gratify human curiosity, though it is often mistaken for this. The Catholic believes in the suffering souls of purgatory, but he does not believe in the materialisations of the spiritists; he believes in prophecies and miracles, but not in occult phenomena. Regarding anything that savours of the curious he is shy and sceptical; he believes in the resurrection of the body, but not in astral bodies; this is a 'supernatural' which he does not recognise. For the Catholic the supernatural is the religious as opposed to the worldly, the future life as opposed to the present, the divine as opposed to the human.

The religious and the worldly: we have seen that all things are interrelated, that everything in the universe exists for the purpose of religion, that all things created, from the lowest to the highest, ascend in a

stream or procession to God. But this work of linking all things together is not yet completed. God did not complete it; it is his will that we should do so. Church and State, education and religion, the things of the world and the things of religion, all these have to be knit together in a harmonious union. The great difficulty is to leave none of these in isolation, yet to respect the individuality of each, not to violate the laws of any one, and yet to amalgamate them all. Then we have the contrast between this life and the life to come. This life is not self-contained, it must pass away and merge into the future life. We have to leave this present life, but we must not despise it. We have to accept this life, but we must not be fettered by it. Who can unite these two in a lasting union, a high-souled faith in the future life and a joyous love for the things of earth? Who can love the stars and at the same time love the dust of the wayside? Who can combine these opposites without partiality? Thirdly, there is the contrast between the human and the divine. Christianity, we have said, is God's handiwork, it is the outpouring of God into the soul. But this outpouring presupposes the human soul, it presupposes

nature, to God's action *ex opere operato* something must correspond *ex opere operantis*. We must strive as if it rested with us to prepare God's way before him, as if we had hills to level and valleys to make plain, as if we had to guide the stream of God's outpouring. This is the Catholic's great strife in the endeavour to equate nature and supernature.

Equilibrium was achieved after long strife. The formulation of the doctrine of original sin is perhaps a classical example of the way in which dogma may be developed and become clearer and clearer. For the early Christians, the doctrine of original sin was coloured by their abhorrence of the life of the senses, of the demonic element in man's sensual life. But this abhorrence was not allowed to go to the excess of despising the senses, of regarding as shameful what is God's handiwork. Hence the theory of original sin was so elucidated as to make clear that all that God has made is good. If discord appears in God's work, this is the effect of man's sinful will. What a mystery![1]

Faith, then, gives us a synthesis. We know that all things work together unto good,

[1] Cf. page 15.

that all things have a place in our soul, as they heve in the divine plan. But in practice few have ever succeeded in effecting this harmony between nature and supernature. Even the saints have sometimes failed. There have been saints—so we read in the Breviary—who never entered a garden, like Bernard of Clairvaux, saints who closed their eyes to nature; and there have been saints who called every flower 'sister,' who spoke of 'Sister Sun' and 'Brother Wolf.' Even one and the same saint does not always achieve a perfect adjustment of the two extremes. S. Ignatius, who could speak so enthusiastically about the stars, yet also said: 'You advance only in so far as you renounce, and no further.' Where shall we find the complete reconciliation? It is a tragic problem that we are trying to solve. We must never tire of running hither and thither in the attempt to build the bridge, the bridge that will never be completed; and we must not let one pier fall for the sake of saving the other. It would be easy enough to lapse into an exaggerated spiritualism or puritanism; still easier to let the spiritual pier crumble for the sake of materialism.

Let us now consider the other two opposite

tensions which affect us in our approach to action; the opposition between the law and the self, and the opposition between precept and counsel.

The law and myself; here again is tragedy. The Catholic Church is sometimes called a Church of law, and it has been said often enough that she is nothing else but the continuation of the synagogue of the Old Testament, that she is benumbed with legal forms and decrees. This is an exaggeration. That the Church has her laws no one will deny; but they are relatively few. She has indicated the natural law which every man must observe, even though he is not a Christian. She has promulgated a few positive laws; the laws of faith, hope, and charity, the law of the reception of the sacraments, the law of subjection to the authority of the Church. But these are divine laws committed to the Church by her Founder. Besides these there are a few commandments for the generality of the faithful. Then there are a certain number of laws for various states and conditions in the Church, laws for priests and religious orders. So, if it is merely a question of the number of laws, the matter is not very serious.

But what of the spirit of these laws? What of this legalism, this juridical constraint, and the casuistry that is its outcome? That the Catholic should engage in casuistry should not be taken amiss, since this is only a consequence of the fact that he treats his conscience seriously. Suppose that a man controls great property, and may dispose of it at his good pleasure. If he is a conscientious man he must ask himself: what am I required to do by the natural law, by compassion, by the Christian law of charity, by the unwritten law of perfection? How far must I, how far may I go? All this is casuistry. We cannot do without it if we are to take our cases of conscience seriously. But to be constrained by laws spells slavery, it means that a yoke is laid upon us from without. Are we not called to the freedom of the children of God? The law is not an end in itself, nor is the law creative. The law does not make the good, as a modern Ethic would have it, as if the Catholic believed that a thing is good because it is allowed and evil because it is forbidden. The fact is, that we are allowed to do a thing because, antecedently to the law, it is good. The law is not creative, it does not make the good;

it bends the will to the good. The law is a hand-rail to guide us; it should be a staff and a support, to prop the young shoot of moral growth until it is able to stand erect of itself. Law wants to make itself superfluous, it wants to lead us beyond itself, to make free men who will no longer need it, men who will do good spontaneously and naturally, men in whom goodness is the inviolable law of existence. This is the purpose of law, to make man free, to liberate the personality. But it is only the good personality, only the holy individual, that the law will see achieve its freedom; all the rest must be led by the law until they are free. What S. Paul said of the law, that it is a teacher until Christ comes, is true of the Catholic in respect of sanctity. No law, even the law of God, is an end in itself, it is merely a means to ultimate freedom.

But here again we find a tragedy. If we liberate ourselves, may we proceed indefinitely in that direction? Are we to free the individual entirely? Is the individual ever quite free? Much is said nowadays of the creative man, who makes his own law for himself: if he wills and does a thing, this is thereby constituted his Good, his Absolute.

But no man is creative in this sense. We are none of us springs that contain water in ourselves; it must flow into us from above. Even the man of the most spontaneous, of the deepest and richest genius, if he has a law, must have received it from God. Man is not creative. Nor is man self-sufficient; not even the most gifted man has in his soul all the laws and degrees of goodness. We find that even the man with the strongest individuality finds difficulty in living in conformity with society, in deriving from himself the laws which govern society. Hence until a man appears who is a law not only to himself but to all others, there will be no man who is perfectly autonomous, totally self-sufficient. No man can be so emancipated as to need no external support. Man is not a thing perfect and refined. There is no man who is a completely harmonious and uninterrupted unity. In every man there sleeps a beast, in every man there is a yawning chasm from which there surge up unsuspected clouds of darkness and even when he thinks he is near to the summit of perfection, the menacing beast sets upon him, and he has still the struggle to face. The pure and perfect man does not exist;

and as long as man is not completely purified he cannot be autonomous, he will ever distrust himself, he must allow himself to be led, he cannot be a law unto himself.

It is seen, then, that while the purpose of the law is to make man free, the process of deliverance itself demands the law. The freer a man is in reality, the greater is his meekness, his humility, his diffidence, his patience, his distrust of himself and his gratitude for the support that is given him. In fact the man who is most free is most glad of the support of the law. Willing obedience to the law thus becomes the criterion of freedom. Here is another bridge that we have to complete: the more free we are made of the law, the more in our innermost hearts are we thrown back upon it; and the more a man holds fast to the law, the more he grows in freedom. Who shall solve this riddle?

Now comes the last tragic contrast, the most poignant of all, although not all men experience it: the contrast between precept and counsel. Christ has bidden us do works of supererogation. 'If thou wouldst be perfect,' he said, 'sell all that thou hast.' He has recommended perfect poverty, perfect

chastity, if we would be perfect. There are other works of supererogation. One man, in his desire for perfection, may devote himself to the life of the apostolate, another may give up his whole life to the care of lepers or the sick, in order to gain complete freedom, to live in complete purity, to correspond perfectly with the will of God. Never will a work of supererogation be undertaken from weariness of the world, from a desire to escape, or from a feeling of resentment. If this were the motive, then it would not be a work over and above what is due, it would be less than our duty. Only willing and triumphant enthusiasm will lead men to follow the counsels of perfection.

It is God's desire that there should be such men. Since by the use of our free will we are to perfect the likeness of God in the universe, the greatest perfection of our freedom will consist not only in the willing fulfilment of the law but also in free activity outside the sphere of the law. We must be free in the land of freedom; this is the highest perfection of liberty. In fact the world lives on such freedom; the world flourishes through the activity of these spendthrifts who are extravagantly free,

who, for the perfection of the universe, freely do what otherwise none would undertake. The world lives on these prodigals who lavishly expend their goods and their charity on every side, as the sower sows his seed. The world lives on heroes, on spendthrifts who gladly give what they need not give at all.

But tragedy enters also here. Enthusiasm, exuberance, flames up, and is followed by reflection; and then comes paralysis. Even the greatest of unfettered enthusiasts, even the noblest of heroes after a few moments becomes self-conscious; he reflects upon himself, and in this reflection the glow of enthusiasm cools. Then he tries to recapture his enthusiastic mood and it eludes him. In the realm of the spirit there is no turning back. Once the summit has been scaled there can be no retrogression without self-reproach. So he will have to steel himself, he will have to take a yoke upon his shoulders, and bind himself by a vow. But with the vow duty begins again, and the work of supererogation ceases. What before had been a joyous urge, a triumphant enthusiasm, has now become a burden, and he can only wait for the spiritual moment

which will raise him again to the level that he had reached before.

This is the great tragedy in the lives of the saints. The further they advance, the more they become conscious of their own imperfection, the more severe they are in self-accusation; and rightly so, because with their advance they have become benumbed and encrusted with dust. This chill world benumbs the spirit and forms a crust around it, and the spirit must enkindle within itself a new fire to break it asunder. We can see this clearly in the history of the religious orders in the Church. All these orders came into existence through the heroic work of some holy man or woman, through the enthusiasm of some man who dared and thought he might achieve the impossible. Yet no sooner had the founder arrived at the summit of his purpose than he must needs reflect upon the height that he had reached, and in order to consolidate his progress, he must make a 'Rule' for his brothers and sisters in religion. And so immediately you have rigidity, you have the yoke, the encircling crust. Another fire of enthusiasm is needed to burst asunder the new bonds, so that progress may be made to

still loftier heights of perfection. Hence come strife, wounds, self-reproach and suffering.

Even the Catholic Church herself, which is the foundation of enthusiasm, which came into being as a unique work of supererogation, as the work of a Saviour, as a work of universal redemption, as a work of prodigality in the highest sense, as the fruit of Pentecost and of the Holy Spirit, as a living fire, even the Church is subject to this tragic tension of which we speak. This work of supererogation, too, must be maintained, assured, regulated and made firm. And hence again rigidity, hence again the dust of centuries which, if it clings to her, may clog her activities. O Catholic Church, O Angel of the Lord, Raphael, who have been given to us as our guide in this pilgrimage on earth, may you ever in the future, as ever in the past, have the strength to stride forwards so mightily as to shake off the rigidity which, humanly speaking, would benumb you. Catholic Church, Angel of the Lord, may you ever in the future, as ever in the past, find the strength so to move your mighty pinions as with a great wind to sweep away the dust of ages!

Such is the travail of the Catholic; and all the martyrdoms of the Christian persecutions, all the self-torture of Asiatic ascetics, are but a jest in comparison to this. The Catholic is nailed to the cross of his ideal, and centuries of time must pass until all is consummated.

## III

### THE SOUL OF THE CATHOLIC

It has been said that Catholicism is a '*compositio oppositorum*,' a combination of opposites, and in fact the last two conferences show that the Catholic religion does combine contrasts. The reality in which the Catholic believes, the values which he purposes to create, abound in intrinsic tensions and contrasts. Ours is a religion which, while it strives and yearns for the life to come, is yet obviously a mighty force in this life too. It is a complicated system—more so than any other—of logical and psychological forces, and yet it has much that is simple, straightforward, popular. The Catholic's faith in reality is suffused with the sunshine of joy and gladness, and yet in practice he labours under tragic perplexities and antinomies.

Clearly, then, it is not easy to describe the Catholic soul in a formula. But there is

an additional difficulty. Not only does Catholicism, as we have described it, set its stamp upon every soul that embraces it, but every soul embraces Catholicism in its own particular way, each soul reacts in its own way to the system that informs it, each soul gives Catholicism its own answer, an answer which each soul alone can give from the depth of its being, its freedom and its grace. It is therefore impossible to express the ultimate secret of the Catholic soul; this is something ineffable that lies deep in the nature, the will and the divine grace bestowed upon each. All that we can do is to describe the stamp that Catholicism sets upon the soul, the common element that is found in all Catholics, however it may be differentiated by an incalculable number of types, peculiarities and individual characteristics.

We may perhaps apprehend the essence of the Catholic as he is moulded by his creed if we remember that the Catholic bears the impress of the reality in which he believes, that he is constrained by this reality, but that he stands between opposite tensions which force him to and fro between two bridge-piles which lie far apart from each other. The essence of the Catholic may thus be

defined as 'movement in constraint.' The Catholic is moved, and he is constrained; his movement and his constraint are the condition one of the other, while both condition his advancement and the burden under which he makes progress. Let us study this movement in constraint.

That the Catholic is under constraint he has been told often enough in every conceivable accent, and even if he had not been told so by others, he would long ago have learned it by his own experience. He is constrained by the reality in which he believes, by the objective world in which he lives. We have considered this objective world: it is God and God's universe, the Church and her communion, the Tradition of centuries that encompasses him, the entire world of his dogmas, his laws, his ethic, his moral theology, in a word, his spiritual environment. From this reality derive the constraining forces that always derive from reality, first an unyielding firmness. We have seen that psychologically the characteristic of reality is that it is hard and unyielding, that it presents an uncompromising front, it will not be set aside or removed or destroyed; it is independent of our feelings or

desires. So reality for the Catholic is something that he can never set aside, something of which, even with his soul's last thought, he can never be rid. This, and not custom or training or force, is the source of the consistency of his conduct, of his ethic and of his moral standard; this is the source of his unbending will, of his singleminded purpose, of that fidelity to principle upon which reliance may be placed under all circumstances, of his spirit of martyrdom. As reality is hard and unyielding, so the Catholic stands upon his principles, which are firm and steadfast as a rock.

A further fruit of reality is a certain modesty. Reality is modest and produces modesty. The Catholic is a humble man because he believes in a reality which is relative, and from which, therefore, he expects no more than it can offer. He is a humble man because he believes in an objective reality which is independent of himself, and so for himself he makes no exaggerated claims. But it is precisely this humility that saves the Catholic from despair, that gives him courage and saves him from the inevitable tragedy of life. He does not collapse in the face of reality because he

does not expect from it more than it is able to give. He does not expect on earth the ultimate solution of all problems, he does not expect to find perfect harmony in this life, nor does he hope for a paradise in this world. And therefore he is not disappointed. This courage also enables him to look upon the bright side of things in life. Precisely because his attitude to reality is modest, because he makes no exalted and exaggerated claims, he is thankful for every gleam of light that shines through the clouds, he appreciates everything that is beautiful or great in his experience, he has an eye for all that is bright and lovely. Reality gives him also a sense of order and proportion. All reality is well-proportioned and acts in an orderly manner, and therefore the Catholic loves and observes order; his manner of life reflects the orderliness of reality itself. The Catholic is averse from all artificiality, sentimentalism and extravagance; he feels an invincible distrust of all that is unwholesome. No word occurs more frequently in the literature of the Church than the word 'sound'; sound doctrine, sound ascetic, sound living. All that is artificial, emotional, demonic or passionate is incompatible with the Catholic character,

because it contradicts the orderliness that he contemplates in reality.

The soul of the Catholic man, therefore, is possessed by a sense of reality, by the perception of something distinct from himself, something objective. He is not determined by the subjective, by feeling, or by temperament, still less by caprice or instinct, but by something which is outside and above him. So true is this that even outside agencies, the ceremonies, the symbols, the dim dusk of his churches, the ringing of his bells, the splendour of colours, the magnificence of his ritual, do not exercise a direct influence upon him, as has often been thought, to induce in him a happy, or a distressed, or a repentant state of mind. No; these things produce their effect mediately, through dogma, through reality. The ringing of bells falls upon deaf ears, unless the mind dwells on the thought of God incarnate; the colours in our churches are drab, except in the light of the Holy Ghost of whom we are thinking; the sanctuary lamp tells us nothing, if the Eucharist is not in the Tabernacle; nor has incense its sweet odour, unless it ascends to God to whom we pray. It is only in the light of this reality

and in virtue of this reality that symbols become speaking messengers to arouse in our soul moods of joy or sorrow.

The essence of the Catholic, then, is shaped by an objective reality, by something distinct from himself; in effect a sort of heteronomy. This is the reason why the Catholic can never feel that he is alone. The Catholic can never be alone, never stand alone, never go alone, never decide or will alone; for he is a unit in the universe, he is ever under a God who is above him and watches over him. He is never autonomous, never his own master, never the source of his own being, never the end of his own existence; there is always Another; he is never alone. And this fact has a very far-reaching influence upon his character and his essence.

But this domination of objective reality must not be conceived as a despotic tyranny. The Catholic's ruler is no foreigner, for of this reality he himself forms a part, and to it he freely conforms his own will. Reality is a common possession in which he participates. God possesses it, the Church possesses it, but he possesses it too. He makes it his own also by the love he bears it. The Catholic does not groan in subjection to an alien Fate;

he rejoices in the love of life. And love makes the will of the beloved its own will; love says: 'Not my will but thine be done.' The logic of love says: 'Thy will is my food; if thy will is fulfilled I am content.' In the logic of love what is another's becomes one's own. Hence whatever happens in the Catholic's world of reality is the Catholic's own concern; every event, every achievement is his interest. In the Catholic world we see realised the ideal which we so often fail to achieve in our earthly national life. Where is the man whose nation is his concern, who is as interested in the national welfare of his own country as if it were his own business, as if the State were nothing else than an extension of his own self? This ideal, I say, is fulfilled in the Catholic, for whom his Church, his community, his God is his own chief concern.

There are three attitudes that a Catholic may take up towards his Church, and each of these is equally laudable, each regards the Church as the Catholic's own proper concern. There is, first, the attitude of the Catholic who regards the Church as his precious possession, and is happy in the consciousness of his privilege. For him the Church is a Mother

who is taken for granted; she has reared him, she gives him all that he needs; he obeys her, he makes no fuss about her, he simply reposes in possession of what is his own property. Then there is the enquiring Catholic who runs to the Church with all the questionings of his soul, who is incessantly asking, beseeching and praying, who comes to the Church with all his riddles, his problems, his yearnings, his needs and his sorrows. For such a Catholic the Church is his haven of rest, his great counsellor and helper, his guide. Finally there is the active Catholic, for whom the Church is his appointed work, his chief concern, which he has to promote, the kingdom that he has to build up, the life's work to which he has to devote himself. For him the Church is a trust which has been committed to him by his Father. Clearly, then, the reality which constrains the Catholic does not press upon him from without like a tyranny; it urges him from within. He feels it not as a constraint or a coercion, but as an impulse that surges from the innermost core of his being. Moreover, this reality constrains the Catholic through the medium of persons. It is not like an inexorable fate, not like a natural law,

stiff, cold and dead, but warm and living, it constrains as only a person can induce or determine. There is something in personal influence that eludes calculation. I know exactly how a natural law is going to affect me, but I cannot forecast the action of a living person, be he never so dear to me, because he is ever full of surprises and contradictions. Yet the Catholic submits himself to personal authority without fear of the consequences, because that authority does not act arbitrarily, but according to a holy necessity. All persons, from God down to the Bishop who speaks in his name, conform to a metaphysic of truth and reality. And this is the secret of the theocracy of the Church, this is the explanation of ecclesiastical authority, which non-Catholics find so difficult to understand.

How, it is asked, can a man of the twentieth century, a man who has come to the use of reason and to a consciousness of his own personality, submit in this way to an outside authority? It is possible because that authority is a theocracy, and precisely on that account cannot be a tyranny. It matters not who the man may be who wields ecclesiastical authority; the man is nothing, the

man is indifferent. But upon that man has been bestowed the charisma of authority, upon him is set the seal of divine omnipotence. God, who rules him, rules also through him. For this reason it is possible to obey a man without adoring him, to submit to him without becoming his slave. It is always a great risk to serve a man, to follow the lead of a man, to believe a man. But that risk disappears when God himself works and manifests himself in this man, when it is a divine authority to which we submit and which we adore. Hence it is possible for the Church to be democratic without suffering the limitations of democracy. Democracy in the history of peoples has always catered for the average, for the level of the masses, and that average, that level, always tends to fall. The masses press each other down, they strive to level down, to prevent any from rising above the average. Why is the Church exempt from this law of democracy? Because the charisma of authority descends from above, a power from heaven overshadows a man, takes hold of him and raises him up, be he only the son of a farmer or labourer, and sets the tiara upon his head, as a sign that it is not the masses that rule,

but that they must look to one above them.

It is only the theocracy of the Church that renders the unchangeable element in her capable of being adapted to circumstances. The authority of the Church is immutable; none can resist it, none can set it aside. It is secure from the attacks of the mob, from caprice, from passion and from the ravages of time. And yet though immovable, it is mobile, elastic, adaptable, because it is wielded by men: men come and go, but the shadow of authority under which they stand remains for ever. This theocracy, too, makes it possible for man to be bound in conscience and yet to remain free. What man is free? He only who is not pledged to any man, who has no fear of man, and seeks no man's favour. The Catholic need fear no man, nor needs he any man's favour, for he feels himself bound in conscience only to God, who speaks to him through the mouth of men. Because the Church is a theocracy her authority is suffered willingly by her subjects; they obey with a full trust in God who has set a man to rule them. God will have his reasons for choosing the man whom in fact he has chosen; he knows best. As

for those who are set in authority, they have been raised to office not through any desire to rule, but by the desire to serve, by the desire to be servants of the servants of God. What an awful responsibility it is to be a ruler! What a task it is to govern! Catholic authority is fully aware of this responsibility, and it is from this consciousness that the faults of Catholic rulers often arise. If a ruler in the Catholic Church tightens the reins too much it is not from a love of power, but because he feels his responsibility, because he suffers under the burden that weighs him down, and so, poor man, in the anguish of his soul he grips the reins too firmly in his hands.

But there are conflicts in the Catholic Church; the Catholic man sometimes comes into conflict with his Church, with the authority of his Church. There are conflicts, but if they are conducted on both sides in the same spirit they are an element of life, a principle of progress. And what is the spirit that must inspire the opponents? Responsibility for the truth, responsibility for the community and for the common good. If this is the aim of the contestants on both sides, then it is an heroic struggle. A man

who is truly a Catholic and who engages in conflict with the Church in the manner in which Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord, will find no curse, but a blessing: 'I will not let thee go until thou bless me.' But of course the attitude must be the same on either side. The Catholic Church respects the intellect and the power of the intellect. She fully appreciates the power of an idea; she knows that an idea may shine like a star amidst the clouds; but she knows also that an idea may set the world ablaze. The Catholic Church is quite aware that the mind of man is mighty and capable of finding the truth; the Church is intellectualistic. But she is not rationalistic; she does not believe that any intellect can discover the whole of reality, or that even a genius, the greatest of savants, can know all things. The Catholic Church has full confidence in the truth and believes that truth will ultimately prevail; but not to-day nor to-morrow; in thousands and thousands of years. She believes that the true progress of man is very slow, and that the contribution that a really great man makes towards that progress is very rare indeed; she does not believe that every day brings epoch-making discoveries. The

Catholic Church is sceptical regarding the efforts of individual searchers after the truth, though she has unbounded confidence in truth itself. The Catholic Church loves progress and desires progress, but still more does she love and desire the salvation of souls, goodness, humility and love. Such is the attitude of Catholic authority. And therefore it is impossible that a true Catholic should be embittered by any conflict he may have with his Church. No conflict with authority will break him, or lead him astray. It will be only the effort of the spirit ever to understand more and more.

Certainly this constraint has its dangers. What noble thing has not? And the greater its blessings the greater are its corresponding dangers. The Catholic has his temptation, and his greatness consists precisely in the fact that he has the temptation that he has, and not a lesser one. And what is the temptation of the Catholic? It is that he should allow himself to be overwhelmed by reality, that he should cease to be master in his own house, that he should set too little store by his own personality and attenuate his own capabilities. That this temptation does exist may be seen in the fact that even

certain Catholic educational works falsely define the noble virtue of humility as 'a feeling of inferiority.' Those who hold this view have succumbed to the Catholic's great temptation to minimise the power of the subject, to set human activity too far in the background behind the power of God that works in man.

Then again it may be that reality is not grasped by the Catholic in all its amplitude; he may consider it only from one side. The Catholic looks aloft, his view is far-reaching, he aims at a distant goal. But it may be that he overlooks what is before his eyes, he may stumble over what lies at his feet, he may neglect the simple, everyday, homely natural virtues. Have all pious Catholics escaped this peril? He who keeps his eyes so constantly raised aloft can hardly at the same time pay heed to the earth on which he walks. Gothic was the architecture of the Middle Ages, and its peculiarity was to raise its structures to breathless heights beyond the reach of sight; but its danger was lest the foundations should prove too slender. The baroco followed with its wider areas and broader foundations; but it lost in consciousness of purpose, and failing to

achieve its lofty aim it issued in futility and childishness. The Catholic's temptation is a great one, and who shall say that he has always overcome it? But the proof of his greatness lies in the very temptation which assails him.

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Let us now consider the movement which is the outcome of this constraint. The constraint to which the Catholic is subject results in movement because the very reality that fetters him contains within itself the motives that impel him, the influences that work upon him, the opposing stresses that leave him no repose. Evidence of this may be found in the manifold movement of the Catholic soul in his intellectual and moral life, in his life of prayer and in his affections.

Is not the intellectual life of the Catholic a life of movement? He has daily to cope with numerous problems and tasks, and yet all the while his hands are bound; he has to fight like a giant in chains. He is bound by his dogma, by his Church, by his Bible, and by his Tradition, and yet he has daily to deal with ever new questions, with a new life, with new obligations, with new joys, with new

problems. Must not this engender movement in him? The plough that he must drive through the field of the spirit is heavily loaded, it is pressed down under a heavy weight, and it has to be driven deep into the soil.

Catholic Tradition is everlasting movement. The treasure of Tradition upon which we live is not something mechanically handed down to us, no relic of a bygone age which we preserve for its artistic value; it is a living stream that flows through our souls, a unique and uniform consciousness with which we are all filled, and which has to be created anew in each one of us, every day, every year, in every century. And in this vital intellectual stream dogmas, beliefs, promises are ever being born again, just as in a liquid solution crystals form, and every moment are dissolved and form again, but always in the same shape and according to the same law. Is this not movement?

Hence we see movement in the conceptions of the Catholic, for example, in his conception of the Church. The Catholic conception of the Church has developed since the time of S. Paul, and yet it has remained always essentially the same. First there was the joyous loving community of the early Church;

then came S. Augustine with his magnificent idea of the *Civitas Dei*, the City of God; then in the Middle Ages the idea of authority was accentuated. To-day in contrast to the confusion of Relativism and Subjectivism, it is perhaps as a systematic form of religious belief that the Church is most prominent in our minds. So in the course of centuries the Catholic has set a new impress upon his concept of the Church, and given it further development. Is this not movement?

Then there is the teaching of the Church concerning Christ. How many different aspects of Christ have come to the fore since S. John said: 'We have seen his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father!' How many meditations have been made on the Word made flesh? First there was the great movement of the Christological controversies, with the dogmatic definitions of the Person and natures of Christ; then followed the concentration of the Middle Ages on the life-work of Christ, on his Redemption, his Passion and Death, his sacrifice on the Cross. The study of his sacrifice showed the way to his Heart and his affections, and there came the period

of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Hence by an easy transition attention was fixed upon the Sacrament of the Heart of Jesus, and so came the period of the Eucharistic movement. And now the minds of Catholics are turned especially to the study of the Christ of the gospels, the lovable Christ, who feels, who weeps, who walks and talks like one of us. Such has been the movement of centuries in Christological doctrine.

Then consider Catholic teaching about God himself. How the Catholic mind has wrestled with the concept of the Godhead! At first the chief emphasis was laid upon his transcendence: he is the infinitely great, the eternal God, far off from this world, the God of the Old Testament, the God of Sinai, the Lord God of armies. But this God came down to us, and came near to man: and in the mystics of the Middle Ages he seems to overwhelm the soul with his presence, so that they speak of the 'night of God,' of God's secret, of his almighty power. And now to-day we have learned to think of God as both near and far. The solution of this problem is less in thought than in love, in the love that says to God: 'I will be good because

thou art so good,' in the love that calls God Father. So God is both near and far; God is another Person, but he is my own; he is far above me, and yet he is my eternal happiness. This is Catholic Monism. But what movement has there not been in souls to bring about a clear expression of this truth.

In the moral life of the Catholic, too, there is movement. Moral endeavour may be defined in terms of love of our neighbour. But in how many different forms this love manifests itself in the Catholic soul! We have seen the dilemmas and apparent contradictions with which the Catholic has to cope in giving effect to his moral values. But these dilemmas and contradictions have the advantage of presenting Catholic love in innumerable forms, under different aspects. All of these have their value, but each is complementary to the other; none is exclusive. There is first the love that is imposed by precept, the love that the will commands. It is strong, it is effective, it is lasting; but of itself it tends to be stiff, cold, aloof; to be able to give itself wholly to individuals it needs to be completed by other forms of love. Then there is the love of understanding, which is the fruit of meditation on God and

men, on the Heart of Jesus and the Sacrament of his love, the fruit of Catholic thought. This love is enduring, it transcends moods, it is independent of good or ill humour, it is strong as only thought can be. And hence such love can be organised, it can be made, as it were, the common property, the guiding principle, of charitable institutions. But still such love remains cold, it is shackled by the limitations of thought, it lacks spontaneity, eagerness, generosity, heroism. For this, love must become a thing of the heart, something that breaks forth like a ray of light, that shines out like the sun, is no longer conditioned by reasoning, knows no strict laws, but is the spontaneous gift of oneself to one's fellow-man. But even this form of love is not sufficient by itself, because in this cold world it cannot keep its warmth, it cannot reach far in its effects, it cannot be organised. Hence it can be only a foreshadowing of what will be one day, it can be only a marvel which prepares us for a more wonderful future. In this way the various forms of Catholic love are distinct from one another, all have their strength, all their weakness, and each is complementary to the others. Is this not movement?

There is movement, too, in the Catholic life of prayer, in Catholic piety. Here the movement is profound, and it is the outcome of constraint. The Catholic is constrained to work out his life with the help of his dogmas. Duty, work, enjoyment, guilt, joy, sorrow, death, mankind, God, the earth, all he has to regulate in the light of his dogmas, all he must work out in terms of his religious beliefs; and all this deepens his life of prayer. His sense of guilt is appreciated in the light of religious truths, and from sinful hearts there arises the most precious of prayers. Well may we say, *felix culpa:* happy the sin that bears such fruit! The joy and happiness of the Catholic, in the light of the dogmas of his faith, become a prayer of thanksgiving; in the light of dogma, his yearnings, his need, his poverty, his infirmity find expression in the prayer of petition. These things teach him to pray, teach him piety. But the Catholic life of prayer rises to greater heights, develops to greater perfection still, because this life is movement; otherwise it would be paralysis. Piety in the course of its development must become more and more conscious, it must be no matter of habit, it must become ever

more consistent, ever more equable, ever more independent of moods and chance; and in this development the inner phases of prayer become manifest. The life of prayer is not a monotonous existence; it is full of sudden apparitions, it has periods of darkness and periods of brilliant light, ascents and descents, it has its sorrows and its joys. The life of prayer is full of periods of stress and periods of fulfilment. But only those can discover this truth who have made some progress in prayer, who have participated in this movement.

The Catholic life of prayer is therefore a life of wide development, and hence it engenders various types. Piety is not the same in every Catholic. On the contrary, the more piety develops, the more manifold do its manifestations become. There is the egocentric and the theocentric form of piety. There is the man who strives after God and after his salvation, whose great joy or sorrow consists in his assurance or otherwise of eternal happiness. Then there is the other who, in his earnest seeking after God, has forgotten self, who no longer sees himself, so blinded is he by the sight of God. There is active piety and contemplative piety;

active piety whose cry is ' Prepare ye the way of the Lord,' the piety that fills the valleys and lays low the hills, that is energetic in external works and executes them systematically and with precision; a piety that is characterised by practical experience, technical knowledge and deliberate calculation. On the other hand there is mystical piety, which does not say, ' Prepare ye the way of the Lord,' but simply looks forward to his coming with tranquillity of mind, a piety that suffers for God rather than works for him, a piety that is more passive than active. Is there not movement in a life of prayer which presents so many different types?

And finally the effective life of the Catholic remains to be considered. The life of the Catholic, in spite of everything, is a beautiful, rich and joyous life. It is a beautiful life. For the majority of Catholics Sundays are the only feast-days in their lives; they have their only glimpse of beauty when they come to their God in his own house; it is only here that they find colour, light, music, joy, unity and peace. What would happen to these unfortunates, these outcasts, these embittered, unhappy folk, did the Church not come to them and quench their thirst

with draughts of beauty? It is a beautiful life because it is also a rich life, a life full of reality, abounding in mysteries, surprises and contrasts.

It is a joyous life. Sickness and poverty, care and weariness, are not wanting, and many a soul is afflicted by these; but fundamentally the Catholic is a happy man. We have seen how he is nailed to the cross of his ideal. This is his torture, but it is also his joy. Had Christ not to suffer, that he might enter into his glory? To suffer for his ideal is the Catholic's most exquisite joy. We all know that a man who is wise is also a man who suffers; but a wise man would not be willing to forgo his knowledge and return to the blissful ignorance of a child. His suffering is his joy; he loves the pain that is the price of his knowledge. So also the Catholic loves the pain that is the price of his ideal. He would not be released from it, because this pain raises him to heights where pain and sorrow are merged in one, where the gulf between anguish and happiness is mysteriously bridged. The Catholic is a happy man because he is a healthy man; and he is healthy because he is not an egotist. Introspection makes a man unhealthy, and

that is why egotists are unhealthy. Health is the product of reality, not of mere wishing; it is the fruit of volition, not of thought. And Catholicism is the religion of volition and reality.

And so the Catholic reconciles in his religion all those paradoxes which at first sight seem irreconcilable, and which most men therefore overlook. They do not see that fruitfulness comes of being receptive and not by violence, that freedom is the result of constraint, that self-surrender brings riches, that responsibility gives strength. The Catholic sees this, and his life is rich and strong and fruitful because he is receptive, because he can accept with humility and can give with generosity, because he can bear burdens, his own and that of others; because, in a word, he is young. The Catholic enjoys perpetual youth, and in this lies the ultimate secret of his happiness. What is a young man? The answer appears by contrast with what we see in the world to-day. The men who pass through the streets of our great cities have had no youth, or else their youth is already withered and decayed. And what is their outlook on life? They have no respect for anything, and so can never be astonished;

they have no capacity for joy or enthusiasm. Everything they see makes them weary; they are bored with everything; whatever happens they say, 'Oh we know that, we know that, there is nothing in that.' They have tasted and sampled and tried everything, and in nothing can they find any further pleasure. Because they cannot wonder as children wonder, nor look wide-eyed upon anything that happens, nor ask questions about anything, they are incapable of receiving any impression, incapable of feeling the thrill of enthusiasm. What man of to-day is unashamedly enthusiastic? What man of to-day will follow a flag without self-consciousness? But a man who is incapable of enthusiasm is incapable of producing anything; for the artist is a man who allows himself to be gripped by an ideal, who, if only for an hour, allows himself to be carried away by his enthusiasm, and surrenders himself to the inspiration of genius.

Here then is the Catholic man, the really Catholic man, living in the midst of his reality, working under the stress of opposing forces. He is a man of prayer who prays day and night, a man who kneels, a man who wonders, who wonders ever at the mysteries

of God and the mysteries of the world, who every day finds new mysteries, is never finished with his questions and his admiration. Because he has the faculty of being surprised, he can be gripped by enthusiasm, and so his soul produces a work of art. This is the fundamental reason of the artistry of the Catholic. It is significant that the greatest art of the past has been Catholic art; because it was the fruit of souls that were young. And if a Catholic produced nothing else than his own life, this would be a vital, living work of art. And if he finished no other work than his own soul, that soul is more beautiful than the greatest masterpiece. He who forms a human soul, were it only his own poor little soul, is a great artist.

O Catholic man, man of perpetual youth, may you be the man of the future, to show us the things to come, to shape the future for us! Catholic man, may you be the man of to-morrow! Rather, we would fain greet you to-day!

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